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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/23/2019
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UNSC](#) [UNGA](#) [CVIS](#) [RS](#) [GG](#)
SUBJECT: GEORGIA: RUSSIA SEEKS U.S. VISAS FOR ABKHAZ, S.
OSSETIAN DE FACTO AUTHORITIES

REF: A. USUN 832
[1](#)B. DICARLO-GORDON EMAIL 9/17/2009

Classified By: Ambassador Rosemary DiCarlo for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST. The Russian Mission to the UN has informed USUN that it plans to seek U.S. visas for Abkhaz and South Ossetian de facto authorities to visit the United Nations in October 2009 to discuss the "humanitarian situation" in the separatist entities. The Russian Mission has asked USUN whether the USG would view this request favorably, but has provided no further information as to the purpose of the visit of the separatist leaders, and to our knowledge, has not yet submitted visa applications. USUN seeks Department guidance to respond to the Russian Federation. END SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST.

[1](#)2. (SBU) Russian Deputy Permrep Igor Shcherbak told Ambassador DiCarlo on September 8, September 17, and September 21, that the Russian Federation would like to invite several Abkhaz and South Ossetian de facto officials to New York to discuss the "humanitarian situation" in the separatist regions. Shcherbak's first approach to DiCarlo on September 8 was in advance of a September 9 vote on a GA resolution on internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Georgia (REF A), when Shcherbak referred to the desire of "some" Abkhaz and South Ossetians to come to the U.S., but did not specify names, dates or objectives. At the time, USUN believed that this approach was a tactic to delay discussion of the resolution. However, on September 17 and September 21 (Ref B), Scherbak stated that Abkhaz de facto Foreign Minister Sergey Shamba and South Ossetian Special Representative to the Geneva Talks, Boris Cherchiev wanted to travel to the U.S. in October to speak on the humanitarian situation in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and asked for U.S. views on whether visas might be granted.

[1](#)3. (C) COMMENT. We understand that Shamba, Cherchiev or other separatist leaders so far have not applied for U.S. visas. It is unlikely that Russia would seek official UN ("G") visas for them to appear before the Security Council or General Assembly. We would, however, expect Russia to seek business (B1) visas for separatist authorities to participate in unofficial events on the margins of the UN, such as an Arria-style Security Council meeting or an informal event on the UN premises related to the humanitarian situation in the region. The Russian Mission has made clear that one of its UN priorities will continue to be to press for direct and indirect recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia, something that could be furthered by the presence of Shamba or Cherchiev at a UN side-event. END COMMENT.

[1](#)4. (U) USUN requests Department guidance for a response to the Russian Mission.
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